

LABOR ACTION

JULY 14, 1947

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

FIVE CENTS

Steel Workers By-Pass NLRB In Negotiations

By EMANUEL GARRETT

In a move that may become standard policy for all CIO unions, the Steel Workers Union, through its president, Philip Murray, last week announced that it would hit back at the Taft-Hartley anti-labor law by ignoring the NLRB in contract negotiations with the employers. The United Electrical and Radio Workers Union has already announced a similar policy. So have the furniture workers.

Regardless of the motives that animated Murray or his methods in seeking agreement with steel company executives on this policy, the move is a commendable one, and undoubtedly represents the sentiment of the union rank and file for a head on repudiation of government restrictions on the labor movement. In the concrete, it amounts to a defiance of the government. Though the anti-labor bill passed by Congress does not make NLRB consultation mandatory, unions are denied various alleged "benefits" under the law, such as the union shop, unless certified by the NLRB. If the policy is to mean anything at all, it means that the unions will refuse to submit to the provisions of the law, and compel respect of union demands and standing in direct contest with the employers.

Whether Philip Murray sees it that way or not, the decision to by-pass the NLRB is a tacit admission that the NLRB is NOT an independent institution, an impartial third party standing between worker and boss. The NLRB is a government institution. In the past, it has been necessary for unions to resort to the NLRB for a variety of reasons, and it may be necessary to do so again. However, it is important to recognize that it is not an impartial institution, despite this or that incidental decision, but a government body, and therefore essentially an instrument of the employers. It is our opinion that when a worker looks upon the NLRB he does not look upon it as separate from the rest of the government, but as part of that govern-

ment. In this he is completely right!

The steel and electrical workers' decisions, however, raise a series of questions. As a promise of militant defiance of the law, it is good, and should be duplicated everywhere. But, there is more to the given law than the NLRB. There is the attorney general who is charged with certain responsibilities under the law. There is the whole apparatus of the capitalist government which must be dealt with. Truman, for example, has declared that it is his duty, despite the veto, to uphold the execution of the act, and it is. He is the executive head of the government. This government is not a people's government; it is a capitalist government, and Truman is part of it. He is not a representative of the people or of labor, but of capitalism.

Thus, Murray's decision on the NLRB raises the question of what attitude the steel union will take toward the government as a whole in its operation of the law. There have been announcements by both the CIO and AFL that the law would be contested by every possible legal action. But there has not yet been a declaration of policy, translating the decision on the NLRB into a general policy of DEFIANCE.

While it is eminently correct in the circumstances to by-pass the NLRB, it is IMPOSSIBLE to ignore the government. The government is everywhere. It is sheer Gompersism to pretend that labor can ignore the government and settle its affairs amicably with management.

If the steel company executives find it to their interest to agree to procedure which skirts certain provisions of the Taft-Hartley law, it nevertheless remains true that the act itself is designed in their interest, will be used by them as they need it. Militant massed union power is the fundamental way to deal with management; and it is as necessary that it be applied on the political front as on the wage front. It makes no sense to ignore the NLRB, and then vote for Democrats or Republicans.

(Continued on page 4)

Labor Party Sentiment Mounting in Buffalo

BUFFALO—Buffalo labor is steadily moving in the direction of independent political action. This unmistakable trend is confirmed by a number of events that have occurred within the past two months.

First, the CIO Council, heretofore dominated exclusively by the Stalinists, passed a resolution calling for the formation of a National Labor Party, to be based on the trade unions. While this resolution, as a document, lacked a good deal of the analysis which the issue demands, and while the Council membership as a whole may not have been, at the moment, crystal clear on the various aspects of the problem, it is nevertheless significant that such a resolution did pass, despite the protestations of Hugh Thompson, CIO regional director and the leading Stalinist lights in the Council.

The second phase of this action by progressive forces within the Council was unwittingly sparked by Thompson immediately after the passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill when he released a statement to the press condemning the National Association of Manufacturers and the Republican Party for the passage of the bill (and other anti-labor legislation)—neglecting to mention the role and record of the Democratic Party in these matters.

This serious, obvious and non-accidental omission was the principal subject of the Council meeting that followed, when a number of delegates, spearheaded by UAW militants, proceeded to cast much-needed light on the Republican-Democrat marriage as regards the Taft-Hartley Bill and additional anti-working class legislation. Despite a defense that bor-

dered on vicious character-smearing, Thompson was driven to the wall and pinned there securely by the arguments of the militant delegates. After a bit of blue-penciling, for the purpose of saving Thompson's face, the delegates reaffirmed the fact that the Democratic Party was equally guilty, with the NAM and the Republicans, of the preparation, support and passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill.

In the various exchanges that occurred during the Council debate it was heartening to note the attitude of many delegates who previously had not indicated a clear Labor Party sentiment. They were quick to call Thompson into line when his statement began to stray from the political subject at hand. Their reaction to the two expressed tendencies was, most certainly, an indication of what may be expected when more heretofore untapped rank and file sentiment is given the opportunity to make itself heard.

Lastly, although there have not as yet been any open, full-scale rebellions, it is a fact that each passing day sees more former American Labor Party supporters and enthusiasts visibly cooling to the line and prospects of that party. Since the ALP, as before, continues to endorse Democratic and Republican hacks under the ALP banner, these former followers, now faced with the conclusions drawn from Congressional action on labor, price control and house legislation, have little sympathy for such a policy and the do-nothing tendency it represents. Whereas the pendulum of class-collaborationist politics was once swung predominantly in favor of the Democrats, the ALP rank and file sees today the spectacle of ALP endorsement in the city of Lackawanna (an industrial steel town in the fullest sense of the term) of the full slate of Republicans running for city office. This backswing of the pendulum cannot, certainly, satisfy the political mood of the majority of independent ALP members. The refusal of the ALP to strike out in an independent course cannot help but alienate even more workers in the coming months.

This pressure for the Independent Labor Party originates, principally, with several UAW locals and can be made even more effective with the immediate formation of a city-wide Independent Labor Party caucus-committee.

UAW-FE Merger

Three articles on the Addes-Stalinist plan appear on page 4 of this issue of LABOR ACTION.

Tenant Protest Rises Against Rent Robbery!

The Fight Has Just Begun!



The first effects of the "rent control" act passed by Congress are now being felt throughout the country. Tenants are feeling the pressures of landlords who are trying to utilize the new law for what it was intended—as a means of jacking up rents and of beginning a series of evictions.

But the worst situation has hit thousands of people who live in hotels as permanent guests. Since the new law completely decontrolled hotel rents, the hotel owners went on a wild spree. In some instances, rents were raised as high as 400 per cent, as in Philadelphia; in other instances, as much as 100 per cent, as in cities all over the country. In New York City, the Housing Expeditor's office reported hotel rents jacked up from \$60 a month to \$150. In Colorado, a case was reported of a worker having his monthly rent raised to a sum higher than his monthly pay.

What to Do, Not to Do About Rent

REMEMBER THESE FACTS IN RENT SITUATION:

- 1) You don't have to sign a lease providing for a rent increase. The new law says plainly that the lease can be signed only as a voluntary agreement between landlord and tenant. If you don't sign such a lease, your rent can't be raised.
- 2) You can't be evicted if you refuse to sign a lease. The law provides that rents are not decontrolled until March 31, 1948. In New York State, rent control is extended until June 30, 1948. There are strong possibilities of rent control extension, at least in some states, beyond that date.
- 3) The landlord can't cut services if you refuse to sign the lease. If he does you can go to the local area rent office and demand a cut in rent.
- 4) If eviction papers are served on you for any reason, you have the right to demand a jury trial. Even if such a trial goes against you, you can be granted a six-month stay of eviction.
- 5) Most important of all, organize tenant groups to fight against rent increases, against evictions and for defense of tenant rights. Contact unions to help you in your fight.

So avaricious have the hotel landlords proved themselves that in order to placate the rising popular discontent on this matter, some municipal and state officials have introduced or prepared legislation to reinstate legislation for rent control on hotels. In New York City such a bill has been introduced, even though it has serious loopholes, one of them being a provision that controls are continued only on those hotel guests who have lived in them since April 1, 1947, while new hotel guests can still be charged any amount.

In many places, especially New York City, wide tenant actions have been instituted against rent increases and tenants are organizing to refuse en masse to agree to increases. Instances of landlords trying to coerce tenants into signing leases with 15 per cent increases have been reported, but the wide publicity given to tenants' rights has prevented such actions from being prevalent. This situation was truly one of mass discontent preventing an outrageous steal from being perpetrated. The rapid action, for instance, of New York City officials in reinstating rent controls on hotels was a direct response to mass sentiment as well as a political move made with an eye on the coming elections.

But the greatest danger remains that of mass evictions. Thus far not too many such instances have been reported, for the landlords have decided to lay low for a while until, they hope, the storm blows over. The law contains a wide-open loophole which permits evictions in cases where landlords want to make "alterations."

What is more, the process of eviction is now made easier for the landlord. He no longer has to go to the Housing Expeditor; he can take his case directly to court with the knowledge that judges are notoriously friendly to wealth and big business.

That means that tenants, while they should try to utilize every possible legal provision, cannot depend on them alone. They must organize their tenants' committees; give the widest publicity to any attempt to evict tenants for any reason whatever. Picket lines must be established around offices of real estate corporations which plan eviction procedures. The mass might of the tenants, organized into their own committees and working hand in hand with the labor unions, is the way to prevent rent increases and evictions.

Mine Union Wins Record Wage Gain

Force Northern Operators to Sign Contract Negating Major Clauses of Taft-Hartley Act

The United Mine Workers Union this week thumbed its nose at the Taft-Hartley Act, signing a pact with the Northern coal operators and the steel-owned "captive" mines which provides for the greatest raise in the history of the miners' union and in effect deprives the operators of the right to seek reprisals against "wildcat" strikes through the collective bargaining machine of the new contract. It is this provision which is held to free the miners, by concession of the operators, from the application of the Taft-Hartley Act.

Inasmuch as one of the principal intents of the Congress labor-haters was to strap the miners, the contract is of enormous significance, both in terms of the law and in terms of the new wage scale. It is a demonstration of what labor can do if it refuses to knuckle under. However, it remains to be seen how John L. Lewis and others of the union leaders will push the fight.

The mine workers represent a section of the labor movement which has often given courage and inspiration to the whole of labor. However, their victory, gained in particular circumstances which cannot be easily duplicated elsewhere, is not yet equivalent to a triumph over the law for the whole labor movement. Moreover, while they compelled the operators to agree to sign away recourse to certain provisions of the act, the act remains on the books, and there is more to it than the imposition of penalties for "wildcat" strikes. The miners have thus circumvented part of the Taft-Hartley Act, but the act is still there to be used against labor and against the miners. There are other aspects involved, such as the

were anxious to sign the contract to prevent a strike after the vacation period, and the rest of the Northern coal industry followed suit. At one point, negotiations almost broke down over the demand of the miners that specific provisions be incorporated in the contract to settle "all questions" growing out of UMW strikes through the collective bargaining machine of the new contract. It is this provision which is held to free the miners, by concession of the operators, from the application of the Taft-Hartley Act.

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specific nature of the negotiations and a price use in coal and steel, on which we shall comment in a subsequent issue of LABOR ACTION.

Lewis used the occasion of the signing of the pact to denounce Taft and the Republican Party. Charging that "the Republican Party in Congress sold out to industry and finance for cash contributions to the last Congressional campaign," Lewis added, "One thing about the present Republican Congressmen—they stay bought." While that is strong talk,

it is shot through with the kind of errors for which labor has already paid dearly. The Republican Party AND the Democratic Party were bought by industry and finance from their inception. ALL Congressmen, not merely the present ones, stay bought in the sense that they belong to a party of industry and finance. Lewis also refused to comment on Dewey, who has not said a word on the Taft-Hartley Act, as though there were a difference between Dewey and Taft. This bodes ill for labor.

Ship Strike in Third Week

Buck Huge Bethlehem Outfit; Negotiations Continue at Todd Shipyards

NEW YORK—As the nation-wide strike of one hundred thousand shipyard workers enters its third week, the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America-CIO have the major yards shut down effectively.

The strike, starting when the workers of Bethlehem Steel, the nation's largest shipbuilding company, "pulled the pin" on June 25, has spread down the Atlantic Coast to the Gulf ports and out to the union's Local 9 in San Pedro, Calif.

The walkout started when the shipbuilding and repairing outfits throughout the country, through their associations, decided to take advantage of the current slump in the industry to cut the ground out from under the union and attempt to return their employees to the wages and conditions that they had in 1937.

Bethlehem led the way when in response to the demand for a new contract to cover the workers in their eight yards they replied with counter-proposals that contained no wage increase, the almost entire elimination of the seniority provisions of the contract and a general demand that the union relax the conditions under which men could be classified. Faced with this arrogant attitude, the national negotiators reported to the membership, who showed their determination to fight by authorizing the Policy Committee to call a strike as soon as possible.

The actual walkout occurred in the Bethlehem yards in conjunction with the passage of the Taft-Hartley bill. The national president of the union, John Green, defied the law and expressed the union's determination to challenge the validity of the

act. Later reports, which have not been confirmed, state that Green has appealed to President Truman to use his powers under this bill to seize the yards.

The union's demands, scaled down from a demand for 25 cents an hour, retroactive to January 1, 1947, consist of a wage increase of 13 cents an hour, six paid holidays a year, three weeks' vacation after twenty years of service and the retention of the seniority and vacation protection afforded in the old contract.

In the New York Port area, all major yards, with the exception of the yards in Hoboken, N. J., and Brooklyn operated by the giant Todd Corporation, are shut down with ships still raised on their drydocks and berthed at their piers. The Todd workers, members of Locals 15 and

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The Boss's Dictionary

Share the Wealth!



NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

Ship Strike Raises Basic Program Need

By B. LOWELL

The current nation-wide strike of close to one hundred thousand shipyard workers is the net result of a five-year policy of union reliance on a joint agreement with the government and the shipbuilders to stabilize conditions in the shipbuilding and ship-repair industry.

This policy, based on the belief that the government, the biggest customer of this industry, could and would bring pressure on the operators of this industry to stabilize wages and conditions, is notable only for its failures, since the end of the war brought a decline in the amount of ships built and repaired in this country.

Another and more complicated aspect of the problem facing the men in this industry is what can be done with an industry that is in a state of decline.

MAKE COMMITMENTS

In 1938-39 large steel and banking concerns, speculating on the possibility of war, entered the repair and construction fields. With employment swelling in this industry, the newly-organized Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, CIO, built its membership up to close to 400,000 at the peak of the war.

Under the leadership of John Green, national president of the IUMSWA, the union entered into a tri-partite agreement with the government and the companies engaged in this work. An administrative body was set up with representatives from the three groups. This body was known as the Shipbuilding Stabilization Commission. An important section of this agreement provides that there would be an annual review of the wages paid in the industry with adjustments to be made relating to

the general wage scales paid for comparable work.

America's entry into the war and the subsequent restrictions placed on the workers of the country, in the nature of wage and job freezing, and the imposition of the Little Steel formula, put a temporary barrier in the way of the wage review and it was abandoned for the war's duration.

Progressive forces within the union, aware of the aid that the government was giving this industry in keeping wages from rising, demanded that the union renounce the stabilization agreement and, relying on the strength of the union, strike out for better conditions and wages and a general strengthening of the union. Though this proposition met with the approval of large sections of the rank and file, it was easily defeated through a coalition of the administration forces and the Stalinists, with whom they worked closely.

At the close of the war, the companies that participated on the Stabilization Committee showed signs of a desire to withdraw from the commitments they had made but the wave of strikes throughout the country and the fact that it was still highly profitable for them to continue to operate the yards caused them to retreat from this position. Thus they paid the 18 cent increase that was general throughout the country. At that they took advantage of the timidity of the union leadership and their obvious desire to avoid a showdown by depriving the men of some retroactive pay and adjustments that the union had demanded.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

The termination of this phase, and the signing of contracts, assured the operators of continued and uninterrupted production until the early and middle parts of 1947 when most of these contracts expired. The Bethlehem Steel Company contract covering the workers in eight yards of this company expired on June 23 of this year and this date was looked forward to by all concerned as the decisive period when the union would be challenged by the entire industry. The industry looked to Bethlehem, as the largest shipbuilding and repair concern, to lead the fight against the IUMSWA. An early indication of the attitude that would be taken by these companies was their sabotage of the annual wage review meeting that was to be held in January of this year.

The rules regulating this review provide that a quorum consisting of a number of representatives from the government, the union and the companies participating be present at this review. The industry representatives, indicating that they no longer felt the need of keeping the union peaceful, simply refused to attend the review, leaving the representatives of the IUMSWA and the government twiddling their thumbs. The union demanded that the government take steps to force the industry members to attend but the government, consistently playing the company's game, did nothing.

When contract negotiations opened late in April it became immediately apparent that the companies were determined to take advantage of the situation to seriously weaken, if not break, the union. They refused to make any wage offer and made such other proposals concerning seniority, vacations and union security that assured their rejection by the union. The membership with quiet but solid determination voted to strike and on June 25 Bethlehem workers hit the bricks. They were followed shortly thereafter by the workers in most of the small yards, leaving only the Todd Shipyards still at work. The Todd contract expires on July 23 and the evident strategy is to continue negotiations with this company counting on a break in the solid front of the shipbuilders.

forces quickly allied themselves with Green and Philip Van Gelder, the national secretary-treasurer. This alliance, barely tolerated by the forces around national Vice-President John Grogan, rapidly became, not an alliance, but the retention of leadership by Green and company with the sufferance of the Stalinists. The Stalinists, as the real leaders of the union, made no change in policy, except a more reactionary emphasis on the no-strike pledge and an arrogant disregard for the welfare of the membership. This helped Green, Grogan and their followers to organize an opposition to the Stalinists with such effectiveness that at the close of the war they were able to destroy the Stalinist machine in all but a few isolated local unions.

WHAT CAN BE DONE? Even the successful termination of the current strike will leave hovering over the heads of shipyard workers the specter of early unemployment. Since the end of the war it has become apparent that for a multitude of reasons the shipbuilding industry is dying a lingering death. What can the workers in this industry do to preserve their jobs in the face of the implied threat of the owners of the industry to abandon it for more profitable fields? The leadership of the IUMSWA has formulated a program that depends on the government to inaugurate a program of shipbuilding. It will become more and more obvious to the workers in this industry that whether or not this policy is put into effect will not be decided on the basis of their welfare, but on the basis of how profitable it will be to the capitalist groups concerned. It would be utterly ridiculous to believe that a decision will be arrived at on the basis of "Save the Industry" unless the saving of this industry meets the long or short term needs of the capitalist class that rules the country.

In place of reliance on the capitalist government, it is necessary for the rank and file of the industrial union to formulate their own program to save their jobs and assure themselves a livelihood. THIS CAN BE DONE ONLY BY NATIONALIZATION OF THE SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY.

It can be argued, and correctly, that nationalization under the same government that cooperates with the present operators of the industry can be little better than the present situation. The perspective of the membership of the IUMSWA must be the nationalization of this industry UNDER THEIR CONTROL. For control BY THE WORKERS whose destiny is wrapped up in the well-being of the industry would at least assure that their welfare would come FIRST and would not be subordinated to Bethlehem's desire for big profits.

The Stalinists flocked into this industry at the beginning of the war and on the basis of the similarity of their line with that of the Green

English Comrade On Labor Party Dear Comrade: I read with interest your report on the British Labor Party conference in the June 9 issue of LABOR ACTION. In almost every respect I can substantiate your analysis from close quarters. On one particularly important point, however, I may be able to correct an impression easily formed when not in a position to examine the situation at first hand.

I refer to the paragraph in heavy print where you say: "There is here an excellent opportunity for revolutionary socialists to direct this dissent along genuine socialist, as against reactionary Stalinist lines." You then go on to say it would seem advantageous for revolutionaries to function inside the Labor Party. You further emphasize this by the closing sentence of your article. You can be assured that the possibilities existing or likely to develop are not overlooked and are the subject of much discussion in the RCP, the only revolutionary tendency in Britain. However, an examination of the position inside the LP AT THE PRESENT TIME does not give such a rosy picture.

The LP is really an election machine and the membership, including that added since the election, is to a great extent dues paying but quite inactive. The wards and divisions

show clearly the difficult and unproductive milieu in which revolutionaries would have to work. Meetings are very small, mainly time-worn functionaries and elderly members most unresponsive to left ideas; and the youth, surely the main object of our attention, is almost totally missing. We would rapidly feel the weight of the LP bureaucrats on entering in the present lull before there is real activation among the rank and file. The trade union field is quite different and offers great possibilities, but until the situation in Britain deteriorates and the workers' tremendous faith in the Labor Government is shaken, entry into the LP would waste our limited forces with little compensation.

Comradely, R. L. Jenkins, England.

WHERE TO BUY LABOR ACTION AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

AKRON Kallas Cigar Store, 1 W. Market St. News Exchange, 51 S. Main St. National News Co., 333 S. Main St. La. Salle Confectionery, 620 S. Main St.

BALTIMORE Fayette and Calvert Streets

CLEVELAND Wheatman's Store, 719 Prospect Ave.

DETROIT Carl's Bookstore, 9109 Woodward, near Clairmont. Cas's Warren Drugstore, opposite Wayne University. Family Newsstand, downtown, in front of Family Theater. Highland Park Newsstand, 13501 Woodward, near Davison.

LOUISVILLE Eilers Bookshop, betw. Liberty and Jefferson on 3rd.

NEWARK 91 Barkley Street. 168 Belmont Ave. Northeast corner, Market and Mulberry.

NEW YORK Ask your newsdealer in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Carried on all main newsstands.

SEATTLE 162 Washington Street.

Savannah Appoints Nine Negro Cops

By E. R. McKINNEY

The city of Savannah, in the lynching state of Georgia, has appointed nine Negroes to its police department. These are the first Negro cops in the state of Georgia, says the news report. These Negro "officers" will be members of the department but they will not be really full-fledged policemen. They will patrol the Negro section of course. That was to be expected. But they will not have full authority even in the Negro section. For instance, if a white man is committing an offense in the Negro section, the Negro cops are not to arrest him unless the white man has committed a major crime. We suppose something like murder or arson. We take it that rape will not be considered a major offense in the Negro section.

If the offense is minor, such as a misdemeanor, the Negro cops are to call the wagon and let white cops make the arrest. They will hold the offenders and turn them over to the white cops when they arrive. It is not reported who will appear in court against the white offenders.

The Negro policemen are not to appear in the business section of Savannah in uniform. That is, they must take off their uniforms before they go into a "white" section. This is the way they attempt to preserve "white supremacy" in Georgia. No mixing at any point; that is, no above-board and public mixing, not even between Negro cops and white "lawbreakers."

We suppose that this should be considered an advance for democracy in Georgia. The clubbing of Negroes is not to be the sole monopoly of white policemen; Negroes will now be permitted to get in on the act.

Bethlehem Strike - -

(Continued from page 1)

Charles Leone, regional director of the IUMSWA for the Port of New York, reports that negotiations are still continuing with the Todd Corporation but that no further wage offers have been made. It also reports that the Bethlehem representatives are meeting with government conciliators and President Green.

At this point it seems impossible to break the strike as the men on the lines appear determined to stick out the fight. Other waterfront unions, such as the National Maritime Union-CIO and the Seafarers International Union and Sailors Union of the Pacific, both AFL affiliates, and the tow-boat workers, also AFL, have expressed their willingness to help by refusing to handle "hot ships."

The government, the most important of the shippers' customers has once again indicated its support of the large corporations as against the interests of the workers of this industry. Through its participation on the Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee, and its agencies such as the Maritime Commission, it is possible for the government to bring pressure on the big shots of this industry to settle the strike. However, it is taking a hands-off attitude.

As this is written, the office of

PHILADELPHIA-The strike threat at the Eddystone works of the Baldwin group, reported in last week's LABOR ACTION, has been called off. The existing contracts are being extended on a day-to-day basis while negotiations continue.

STRIKE CALLED OFF AT PHILADELPHIA EDDYSTONE WORKS

Faced with the threatened strike, the company boosted its wage offer from 7 1/2 cents to 10 1/2 cents over-all cash increase. It also withdrew its demand for mass recoding and down-grading. This demand had been largely responsible for goading the union to set a strike date.

Except for the office local, 2844, the wage cuts and down-grading equalled a challenge to strike. In the office local, some were in favor of taking the cuts rather than strike. Everywhere, though, there was the feeling that the strike would be a terrible financial drain.

Calls on UAW To Lead Rent Fight in Detroit

By MIRIAM EVANS

DETROIT, June 30 - Neither the UAW Housing Commission headed by R. J. Thomas nor the Wayne County CIO Council has offered any leadership in the Detroit area in the fight against the onslaught on labor's living standard contained in the new rent control law. The crucial months of waiting for a rent control law have moved neither the Tenants Councils, organized by the Wayne County CIO Council, nor the flying squads in the Detroit area toward any effective struggle against the landlords.

Last year, with the prospect of a 15 per cent rent increase, the union was up in arms protesting; real rent control, no 15 per cent increase. This year the union has retreated. On June 30, the day before the new law is supposed to go into effect, there is no official policy of the union in this area on the new law. And rumor has it that the Housing Commission and the Wayne County CIO Council are not going to oppose the law vigorously.

The two groups are posing the problem as a choice between no rent control or a 15 per cent increase. No one disputes the fact that a 15 per cent increase is not a 100 per cent increase (at least formally; in practice it may be). But the UAW and the CIO have gone on record in favor of rent control and against rent increases. The Wayne County CIO Council organized tenants' councils on the basis of being for rent control. They know full well that the Tenants Councils and the UAW locals are in a much better position to fight rent increases today than they will be in December, 1948, after paying a 15 per cent increase for 18 months. Thirty-two thousand seven hundred and forty workers in Detroit have been laid off for one to two weeks. A further cut is not welcome.

The landlords are willing to nibble 15 per cent at a time, if they know that eventually they will get a greater and greater share of the workers' wage.

The Wayne County CIO Council and the UAW Housing Commission must present a program of action to fight the rent increase. The slogan of the CIO, "Hold That Rent Line," must be implemented. Mass meetings of the Tenants' Councils throughout Detroit should be called to plan action. The Flying Squads and the Tenants' Councils should coordinate their work. The two must urge the leadership of the union to fight ANY increase and to fight the signifi rent-raising leases.

The UAW-CIO is the only hope in this city for waging an effective fight against the law and the landlords who made the law. Without the leadership, financial aid and power of the union, tenants will be forced to pay any and every kind of rent increase.

Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor...

English Comrade On Labor Party

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Comradely, R. L. Jenkins, England.

WHERE TO BUY LABOR ACTION AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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people drop their slug in when they LEAVE the subways instead of when they enter them. Then at least they would know what they were paying for, that is, the opportunity of getting out and breathing fresh air again.

Now, secondly, it seems to me that since 1894, when the first subway was laid in New York, and of course before—yes, way before (you can see the plaque commemorating the laying of the first subway at the Battery station on the IRT—if you bring a blow torch—it's a little dusty down there). The most monstrous, insulting, chutzpadige fraud has been and is being perpetrated on the working man when he is not only not paid for his "pleasure" ride to work, but has to pay a half a buck, sometimes a buck, a week for that "privilege."

Figure it out—average an hour-one way from Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island—who will ever speak of the Bronx?—means two hours a day—means 10 or 12 hours (including Saturdays) a week. Let us say 10 hours. If a man works a 40-hour week, he is actually giving 50 hours. Ten stolen ours every week, one-fourth of the work time spent in the subway—without pay.

And thirdly, I have a practical program to solve the subway problem. When I first heard some years ago that the city had taken over the subways and that now we owned them, I jumped for joy. Now, I said, when we visit Uncle Hymie in Jamaica it won't cost us 15 cents each way (that's \$1.50 round trip for us, believe it or not). Well, what do you think? The city said, hell no—no transfers—no nothing. Well, that sort of made me angry but it did lead to these instructive thoughts. We own the subways—why shouldn't the subways be FREE? We own the parks, the beaches, the libraries, the schools, museums. They're free—why not the subways? Why not? Is it because the real estate owners own the city?

I have the one, the only way to help reduce the subway "deficit." (I'll bet the city hospitals don't make a profit, either. Maybe they should

start raising the price of penicillin). How many ticket agents are there, 2,500? 5,000? Somewhere in between? No matter. Let the people in free and you save ten million bucks in salaries. Not ONE of these people need be fired. There is a shortage of help in hospitals, schools, sanitation, playgrounds, parks—special training courses could be given where necessary. Sell the turnstiles for junk. You won't realize much from that but it'll be very satisfying.

I suggest the slogan of "Free Fare on Our Own Subways" for your paper during the next period. Yours truly, N. Ackerman.

Editor's Note:

We want our readers to write to us. WE URGE THEM TO WRITE! And we will try to publish as much as is possible. However, we must ask that letters be kept to minimum size, not exceeding 200 words, and preferably closer to 100 words. If letters are too long, we will either have to cut them for publication or return them to the sender. Please write, and please keep the letter brief!

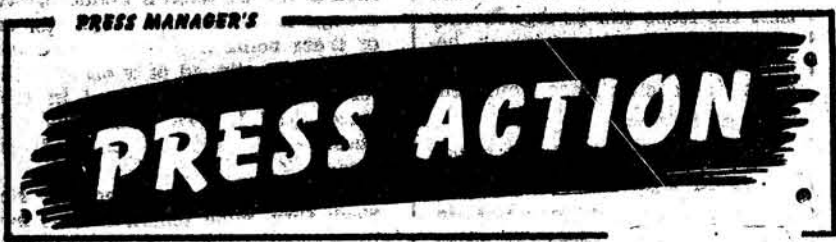
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ESTHER WILLIAMS and AL FINDLEY announce the birth of a daughter SARA ELLEN



THE FOUR-PAGER—IT'S STILL A SWELL PAPER!

This is the fourth issue of the four-pager. Though we still prefer to publish an eight-pager, we think the editorial department has done a darn good job maintaining the high quality of LABOR ACTION. The Business and Editorial Departments have cooperated so that we now squeeze in more copy in the four-pager than before. This is accomplished by cutting down on the number and, more importantly, the size of all our ads, by having this column appear only once per month, by using smaller type in the editorial columns, etc., etc.

We don't want this to discourage the advertisement of Workers Party branch activities or meetings, but we will be forced to use smaller type and give the ads less space. Plan ads accordingly.

You will agree with us that LABOR ACTION is still the best paper in the interests of labor. But we still must work harder and harder to expand its circulation and stabilize it financially so that we can once more expand.

INTO THE HANDS OF MORE READERS

CHICAGO still leads the field in the number of copies sold every week. They sell a regular bundle of 150 per week, besides extra copies at large labor gatherings.

At the AVC convention in Milwaukee the Chicago comrades sold over 600 copies. At a CIO Veto Rally they sold over 200 copies, despite rain and a small crowd.

NEW YORK is also getting there. At the AFL Veto Rally they sold 413 copies. At the CIO Veto Rally over 325, and at a Negro Freedom Rally over 175. Now they have been covering the shipyard strikers with free copies.

CLEVELAND covered the ILGWU convention, but they haven't sent in a report on the exact number of copies sold.

SAN FRANCISCO also has ordered extra copies (twice during the month of June) for sales at union meetings.

But we are falling far short of what is easily possible in getting regular readers for LABOR ACTION—subscribers.

We publish the number of subs that have come in during the entire month of June, 1947. Only 110. During our worst months we were able to get from 50 to 75 subs a week. Now we barely get that many during an entire month. Our LABOR ACTION friends, and especially our comrades of the Workers Party branches, are just falling down on the job.

Sub getting must be woven into all of our activities. Every member of the Workers Party should be able to get one sub per month. LABOR ACTION agents should make that the goal to strive for. Let's see if we can't get back to our regular number of 50 subs per week or 200 per month and from there let's climb to the goal of 500 per month.

The following subscriptions were received during the month of June:

Table with 2 columns: City and Number of Subscriptions. Includes AKRON (21), NEW YORK (21), NEWARK (19), PHILADELPHIA (14), Chicago (9), Los Angeles (8), Detroit (5), Cleveland (4), Morgantown, W. Va. (3), San Francisco (2), Streator, Ill. (1), Miscellaneous (3), TOTAL (110).



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Editorials

Subway Fare

As it does periodically under the pressure of the real estate and other business interests, the New York subway fare issue has risen again. This time it is proposed by Mayor O'Dwyer, "labor's friend," that the fare be raised from five cents to eight cents, or two rides for fifteen cents. The proposition is now before the Board of Estimate for consideration.

O'Dwyer had further proposed that the issue be submitted to referendum in November and that an educational campaign be conducted by the city to influence the working people into gouging themselves by voting tax relief for the real estate interests.

For that is what it amounts to. Subway fare represents a substantial part of every worker's income. Adding to the subway fare means taking that much more out of the worker's pay envelope. With subway riders paying more, the way is open to reducing tax levies on property. Thus, landlord associations and banks have been campaigning for decades to force a fare rise.

It is true that the subways operate at a loss. The loss does not derive principally from operating costs, but is, in large measure, the result of interest payments on bonds which eat deeply into revenues. These bond payments represent a scandalous steal practiced year in and year out, ever since the first subway was built. It has been estimated that the bondholders have been repaid, at a minimum, several times the original cost of their investment. It is a lucrative racket, for which the subway riders pay.

A bold and vigorous approach, based on the interests of the subway riders, would consequently settle the eternal transit fare problem in a jiffy. The bonds could be repudiated as having been paid back in a multiple robbery. Of course, that would not be exactly cricket according to the most sacred law of the land, the sanctity of private property. (Private property in this case being the bank stranglehold on what is after all public property, namely the subways.) The niceties of "free enterprise" are of little concern to us, as they should be to all workers. However, inasmuch as the city administration is naturally going to be more squeamish than we in such matters, we suggest there are other ways of dealing with the bond situation, amortization or any legal device that the Corporation Counsel's office can dream up.

Rest assured that they could find a way if they wanted to. And they don't want to. When you get down to bedrock, it becomes a case of the people's interest versus the interest of the profiteers. O'Dwyer will not be outdone by anyone in his devotion to the fundamentals of capitalist enterprise, despite all the "friend of labor" maneuvers his advisers tell him is good campaign strategy. The problem therefore comes down to the subway riders. Many, a good many of these subway riders are union men and women, and the problem of the subway fare is clearly a job for the unions to handle in vigorous action, as well as for consumer organizations.

Two principal courses are open to the people of New York City: militantly demanding that the bond steal be ended once and for all; or falling that, or with that, militantly demanding that real estate taxes be RAISED to meet deficits, whether incurred through operation or indebtedness. Just that: RAISED. Subways have raised real estate values in an infinitely greater proportion than real estate taxes. Subways are a vital public service. They ought to be paid for by steeper taxes on those who can best afford to pay them and profit most from them.

This latest proposal, as so often in the past, is timed to counteract a wage demand by the transport workers union. The people of New York City ought to refuse to have anything to do with this deception calculated to make it seem as though the transit workers are responsible for the rise. (Note how cutely the schemes of Mayor O'Dwyer and Transit Commissioner Gross, with whom he has been feuding in the public press, dovetail when it comes down to brass tacks. The Mayor pats the transit workers on the back, nets a considerable support among the working people of the city who are behind the transit workers, and then neatly stabs these same working people in the back.) If the issue comes to referendum, or if there is any attempt to impose the rise without referendum, it is up to the people of the city to answer with a resounding NO! (Postscript: It is necessary that we add a word on this point. In the June 23 issue of the CIO News, official paper of the CIO, there is a little story on an inside page about the fare rise, which the CIO News opposes. The story observes that "Mayor O'Dwyer, also an opponent of the fare increase, has expressed a desire for a November referendum on the question." This is pure, unadulterated fakery. More simply, it is a shameful pay-off to a "friend of labor" who began his administration by declaring martial law against the tug-boat strikers. Mayor O'Dwyer is NOT an opponent of the increase. The latest proposals for an increase, repeated at intervals over the last few months, have come FROM Mayor O'Dwyer.)

On Housing

Sometimes we get tired of lengthy and detailed economic analyses, proving to the hilt what everyone already knows. We're sure our readers feel the same way about it. For instance, all the detailed articles about the housing situation, even some of those we've printed in LABOR ACTION. They're necessary of course, but still...

Let's put the matter in its most basic form. Here's a situation where millions of people are without housing. That's one of the reasons for the

current rent steal. There is no evidence that sufficient housing is or will be built in the coming period. Private housing construction, for whatever the reasons, is not doing the job—and the houses that private contractors are building are obviously at too high a rate for most people.

An interesting question arises: Why doesn't the government step in, set up a gigantic housing program on a low rental basis; run the housing projects itself so that landlord profit may be eliminated and rents be kept lower; and break all material bottlenecks that exist, as they were broken during the war?

The job was done for tanks and planes and ammunition. When the government dominated industry then, nobody cackled anything about "private enterprise."

IF THAT COULD BE DONE FOR TANKS AND GUNS, WHY NOT FOR HOUSES?

Or are houses less important than tanks and guns?

Let's put it this way. Capitalist society, in which we live, is more interested in producing weapons of destruction than in providing decent places for people to live. That isn't merely our opinion. It is a fact which anyone can prove to himself merely by comparing the record of the government during the war on armament production and its record after the war on housing.

And there is no more damning contrast on the rottenness of capitalist society.

Indonesia

From the time that it became apparent that the Japanese would lose the war in the Pacific, the Dutch rulers of Indonesia, who had either been prisoners of the Japanese or had fled the colony which they ruthlessly ruled for so many years, have returned for the purpose of reestablishing their pre-war control over the island. But they came back to an island with a powerful independence movement which had gained impetus in the war and which had advanced their struggle for freedom when the Japanese, as a last gesture in defeat, practically turned the islands over to the native republican organizations.

The Indonesians set up their provisional government and proclaimed the independence of their land. But it did not take very long before the Dutch imperialists returned to assert "their rights." Certainly, the Dutch did not have the power to return by themselves. For this they needed and received the aid of British and American imperialism—from the former, the aid was in men and weapons; from the latter money and materials. A sharp war broke out between the Indonesians and Dutch imperialism which has not ended to this day. The Dutch, while granting a measure of autonomy to Indonesia, still demanded Netherlands sovereignty over the land and its immense natural wealth. The temporary "peaceful agreements" have not yet materialized as the natives observe attempts of the Dutch to maintain a stranglehold on their land and its people in the interests of Dutch profits.

The latest fiasco is over the demand of the Dutch for a joint "gendarmarie to police Republican areas." This is the typical imperialist insult to a colonial people. But it is far more than an "insult." The demand for a "joint gendarmarie" is an integral part of imperialist policy and contains within it the greatest threat to genuine Indonesian independence.

Imperialism rules the colonial world through force. The maintenance of a "joint gendarmarie" means that the Dutch imperialists hold on to one of the strongest weapons imaginable in defense of their profit interests. Give the Dutch this weapon and the Indonesians will have a stiff barrier to overcome in creating the conditions necessary for the freedom and development of their nation.

The immediate and almost instinctive reaction of the Indonesians has been to oppose the demand of their Dutch oppressors. Naturally, "the reply of the Indonesian Republic cannot be accepted by the Dutch government as it agrees only partly with the points contained in the Dutch note of May 27." The Dutch understand what the opposition to their demand for the joint police means.

If the Indonesians are to have their independence with no strings attached, they will have to fight to the bitter end against this "clever" imperialist device of maintaining a stranglehold on the colony. The working class of the world should not hesitate for a moment in giving its complete support to the Indonesians, and expressing this solidarity in firm, material ways.

IWO, STALINIST FRONT, PENSIONS MAX BEDACHT

Max Bedacht, one time national secretary of the Communist Party in the U. S. and up to June 14 general secretary of the International Workers Order, was removed from that office at its convention held on the above date. Placed on a pension by the IWO, this marks the end of Bedacht's career as a leading Stalinist functionary.

The reason for his removal, according to Frederick Woltman, the New York Telegram's expert on Stalinist affairs who assembles the data gathered by a group of informers, is that Bedacht opposed the division of the IWO into language and racial groups, charging that this was a policy of segregation. We cannot venture an opinion as to whether this is true or not; all that is certain is that Bedacht is no longer head of this Stalinist mass organization. Neither the Daily Worker nor the IWO have as yet commented on this matter.

Bedacht was formerly a member of the Central Committee of Stalinist Party and one of the leading Lovestonites in the organization. He once entered into an agreement with Jay Lovestone when the latter was leader of the party, to engineer a split of the CP. Lovestone went to Moscow to defend his leadership from imminent removal. Bedacht lost his courage before Lovestone returned to the U. S. The agreement had included taking over the party property, bank accounts and reserves. This would have had no fundamental effect on the Stalinist Party in this country, but it would have created a great deal more confusion than did arise when the group, supported by seventy to eighty per cent of the party membership, was removed from the leadership of the party by Moscow.

It has been a long time since Bedacht was a member of the leading circles of the CP and we dare say his removal from his present post will go unnoticed in an organization which operates in a completely totalitarian manner with a membership that has been trained in this kind of atmosphere.

WORLD POLITICS

By IRVING HOWE

What are the consequences of the refusal of Stalinist Russia to participate in the Marshall plan for European "economic reconstruction"? But first, why did Russia refuse?

This latter is an interesting question and it would be rash to jump to definitive conclusions. The Russians obviously had a difficult choice to make. That they need the financial help which the U. S. is proffering to Europe, is obvious. Russia, despite the shroud of silence which hides the facts, is in a most difficult economic situation: her 1946 harvest was poor, below that of 1945; her production goals in 1946 were not met, as for instance in the case of agricultural machinery which reached only 79 per cent (according to the official report!) of the goal. As Raymond Daniel writes in The New York Times of July 6, 1947, "Russia is faced with economic problems as acute as Britain's. Her people are hungry, ill-housed and ill-clad. She needs help from America as much as any nation in Europe." Why then did she refuse?

The Russians understood that if the Marshall plan were successful it might result in the following consequences, all of them disastrous to the Stalinist regime: (1) A revival of German industry, especially in the Ruhr, under Anglo-American control; (2) a weaning away of some of the east-European satellite states greedy for the American dollars; (3) a total reorganization of Europe under U. S. domination in which, since the U. S. provided the money, Russia would have to play second fiddle; (4) a limited, impermanent but still important revitalization of west European economy which could be used as a buffer against the Stalinist regime; and finally (5) a tremendous rise in the prestige of the U. S. among the people of Europe.

These possible consequences—which may be summed up in a word: the strengthening of the position of U. S. imperialism in Europe and the resultant weakening of Russian imperialism—must have seemed so disastrous to the Kremlin that it decided to forego the advantages of the U. S. dollar and to retrench its régime of terror.

IS EUROPE IRREVOCABLY SPLIT?

Does this, however, mean that Europe is irrevocably split and that, as many commentators have declared, the era of "cooperation" between east and west is at an end? Well, that depends on what you mean by split and cooperation. In a fundamental sense, Europe has always been split between rival imperialist blocs; since the fall of Germany, between Anglo-American imperialism and Russian imperialism. This split existed even during the halcyon days when Russia and the U. S. were proclaiming their everlasting friendship; only then it was subterranean and potential. Now the potential has been actualized: the split is open. But still there remains a measure of cooperation; otherwise all of Europe would be thrown into complete turmoil.

And the chances are that there will yet be dozens of conferences at which Stalinists will "give with alarm," and communists see the "final break." Such a final break, given the continued existence of capitalism and Stalinism, is irrevocable, but it is not likely for the immediate future: neither side wants or is able to rush into an immediate war, and until they are ready for that there will be some measure of cooperation. U. S. and Russian imperialisms will cooperate if to no other end than the continued suppression of the European working class.

However, the question remains: what will be the consequences in the coming period of the refusal of Russia to participate? A few answers may be suggested.

1) The "western bloc" of capitalist powers which already exists in fact will be consolidated formally. One of the first results of that consolidation can already be seen: the removal of the Stalinist parties from the cabinets of France and Italy. The French, squeezed in by both sides and fearful of their powerful Stalinist movement, tried to play a middle-of-the-road role but have now been forced to align themselves with Anglo-American imperialism; there is no force but the U. S. which can prop up its shaky economy. A number of other countries, including perhaps the Scandinavian nations, will be forced into a more rigid alignment with the Western bloc.

2) The most severe internal struggles may be expected in both Italy and France where the powerful Stalinist

movements, in control of the major labor federations, will do all they can to embarrass and needle the pro-U. S. governments. Nonetheless, we believe that the Stalinists in France and Italy will strictly rein in their opposition; they will do their best not to let it get out of their control. Though they will be ready to utilize the vast discontent of the masses against the bourgeois governments, the Stalinists in France and Italy will not attempt to establish a government of their own—even if they could. For the Kremlin understands quite well that an attempt to seize power in France means not only a civil war with the still-present French bourgeois (let it be remembered that the Stalinists have nowhere succeeded in taking power without the direct aid of the Russian army); but means ever more the likelihood of war within a short period of time. The Anglo-American bloc can tolerate a loss of whatever flimsy position it had in Hungary; but it will fight for France. The Stalinists know this—and they don't want to fight yet.

3) A partial economic rehabilitation of Germany is now inevitable. All of the French objections to the rebuilding of the Ruhr will be ignored. As the New York Times comments editorially:

"Many problems face the forthcoming conference, but the central one is Germany. That war-wrecked land, with its 65,000,000 people was before the war the key to Europe's economy. Potentially it still is."

Any reorganization of the European economy—no matter how partial, skinny and transient—must begin with a rebuilding of German industrial production. And apparently part of the Marshall plan is based on an acceptance of this premise. The British-U. S. occupation authorities have in fact just announced an increase of German steel production to 12½ million tons, still half of Germany's previous capacity but quite a jump over the level which the occupation previously established. Germany, then, will be rebuilt, and under the control of Anglo-American imperialism.

4) What of the east European countries under the thumb of the Kremlin? They are in a difficult position: American dollars seem so entrancing, but the Russian bayonet looms over their lands. Yet Czechoslovakia has asked to attend the forthcoming conference as an "observer" and Poland may do the same. The satellite powers which, like Czechoslovakia, retain a modicum of independence—if only by comparison with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia—are sorely tempted.

POSSIBLE STRATEGY OF KREMLIN

As Maurice Hindus writes in The New York Herald Tribune of July 5, 1947: "Czechoslovakia's economy is in urgent need of western markets, western raw materials and western financial credits. She has credit now only with Britain, Canada and Argentina. Trade alliances and other ties with her eastern Slavic neighbors are strong, but none of those countries has foreign credit, cash markets or any quantity of exportable goods."

There's the rub. But there is still another possibility: the Kremlin may have deliberately consented to allow one of two of its satellites to participate in the conference and perhaps in the plan. Whatever advantages accrued to the satellite would eventually drift to the Kremlin, without Stalin having to take responsibility for participation in the plan.

Will the plan "succeed"? That depends on what you mean by succeed. It will not succeed in abolishing misery in Europe, or any of the other destructive human consequences of capitalist society. It will not prevent the trend to war. Those are not its aims. But within certain narrow limits it may—if there is sufficient coordination and skill put into it—give some sort of economic impetus to Europe; it may stir some increase in production; it may bring about some economic order out of the present chaos.

But above all it will "succeed" in consolidating American positions in Europe; it will mark the definitive entry of the U. S. as the dominant power of European capitalism. And it will be a major factor in the preparations for the atomic war between Anglo-American and Stalinist imperialisms which, if there is no socialist revolution to sweep aside this old rubbish, will reduce western civilization to total destruction.

WP Asks Special Legislature Session to Enact Penn. FEPC

Below we present the second of a series of three articles by the Philadelphia organizer of the Workers Party on the reasons for the defeat of Pennsylvania's FEPC, and the behind-the-scenes maneuvers that did it.

By JACK BRAD

PHILADELPHIA—The State Legislature has killed FEPC. Under the rules, FEPC cannot be brought up again for two years. How was a bill which had the backing of 500,000 Negroes, the more than one million members of the AFL and CIO, the Jewish people and their organizations—how could such a bill be defeated? Seldom has any simple piece of legislation had behind it such wide support. FEPC was clearly "the will of the people."

The Workers Party does not agree that FEPC must remain dead for the next two years. The Workers Party puts forward a program of action pointing to the only means of forcing a special session of the State Legislature to enact FEPC into law. Mass action of the working class and of the Negro and Jewish people, can force such a special session which has the legal power to act.

The Workers Party urges the organization of mass demonstrations and a March on Harrisburg. In Philadelphia alone there are 310,000 Negroes. Planned action must be organized in this city and in other cities of the state to force enactment of interim municipal FEPCs, which immediately reduce the horrors of racial hatred in job-getting in these localities.

WHY CAMPAIGN FAILED

Only mass action, under the leadership of the Negro and labor organ-

izations can get results. That is the lesson of FEPC's defeat at Harrisburg. Those who were responsible for the FEPC campaign organized it in a way that was certain to fail. First, they relied on Governor Duff to do most of the pushing. He could not because he was tied to the Chamber of Commerce, controlled by the Republican machine. Second, they relied on "delegations to Harrisburg," visits by groups to individual legislators. The visits of these people have no weight at all as compared with a single telephone call from Joseph Pew or Grundy or any big business man in the state. They wasted their time and their organization's money.

Third, there was reliance on the five Negro Republican legislators from Philadelphia. It was argued that certainly they would fight seriously for a matter of such vital importance to the Negro people. This too proved to be a fatal trap. The five Negro legislators were continually subservient to their Republican bosses. At not one single session did any of them step out of line to strike even one blow for the Negro people. They did not introduce the FEPC bill until the Democratic Party introduced the Walker bill. Then, at the last moment, while the other four representatives remained arguing with the House leader, William Upshur of the 30th Ward, in desperation introduced FEPC so that he need not support a bill by a Democrat.

The worst and most disgusting betrayal was related in last week's LABOR ACTION. Representatives Smith, Mintiss, Thompson and Henry did absolutely nothing. William Upshur, several days before the legislature's adjournment, again in desperation, called his boss, Philadel-

phia Republican leader Dave Harris, to ask if it would be all right to discharge the bill from committee. Harris was against it, so Upshur forgot about it.

BAKER'S LOBBYING

There is one other incident which is revealing. This concerns Joseph Baker, a leading Negro Republican politician from the Germantown area. Baker is an employee in the Department of Labor's Negro Research and Planning division. This is a Jim Crow bureau of the state.

Baker acted as lobbyist for the Chamber of Commerce and the Republican machine on FEPC. He urged the same program that the Chamber of Commerce put forward, namely, elimination of all punitive clauses from the bill. George Elliott, executive secretary of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, acted as Baker's go-between, arranging meetings for him with various legislators.

The Philadelphia Tribune was correct in stating "so-called leaders are attempting to 'sell their brethren down the river' while talking out of both sides of their mouths on this vital issue."

The conclusion is drawn for us by the events themselves. Because a man is a Negro is no guarantee that he will fight for the needs and interests of the Negro people as a whole. If he is part of the Republican or Democratic machine, he is obedient to his bosses, and their big capitalist interests. The color of his skin remains black, but his eyes are cast upward to obey the wishes of the ruling class. He no longer knows or recognizes other Negroes unless they travel in the same circle of sell-out artists as himself. This is the modern Uncle Tom.

CUBA:

A GRAVE THREAT TO ITS ECONOMY

By GASTON BRUYERE

With the re-establishment of post-war economy, once again the historic conflict between cane-sugar and beet-sugar producers has risen to the surface. The struggle between both producing groups is, in its very essence, one of the most typical manifestations of the permanent contradiction of capitalist economy, and at the same time it expresses the struggle for political predominance of this country's ruling class.

The outward fact of the matter is as follows: the U. S. Senate Banking Sub-Committee on Sugar is discussing a substantial reduction of the Cuban quota. It is proposed to cut a large slice off the basic quota which this country assigns to the growers of Cuban sugar cane, for the sale of this product in the U. S. market, and to sacrifice the people of both countries through this financial game. The Americans will be deprived of the full consumption of a high-class product to which their needs are already conditioned, and the Cubans will suffer because their whole economic structure is based on sugar-growing.

The penetration of U. S. finance capital has framed Cuban economy in a purely colonial form. All the most fertile lands have been turned over to the cultivation of sugar-cane; the island's economy is shaped to the sole production of "sweet gold" in its primary forms. Later on, the sugar, as raw material, is taken over to the American refineries in the U. S. A., and it is manufactured in this country, thus leaving the Cuban people on the outside edge of all the big profits, the cost of labor, the taxes, the salaries, etc.; finally, the refined sugar is sent back to the very people who produced it and who then have to pay a high price for it. In spite of the fact that the big profits are snatched out of the Cubans' hands—80 per cent of the global cane-sugar production in Cuba belongs to American companies—and that the transportation of this merchandise is monopolized by American shipping firms, and that the movement of Cuban sugar in all the markets of the world is managed by American importers, in spite of all this, the Cuban people as a whole are forced, due to the circumstances of their single-production system, to defend their position as the first sugar-producing centre of the world. This position is absolutely vital to Cuba's economy. The life of the Cuban people depends exclusively on selling their sugar on a large scale.

PAUPERIZING THE WORKING PEOPLE

If the U. S. Senate definitely approves a reduction of the Cuban quota and brings it down to the suggested 23 per cent of American home consumption, as seems to be the present intention, this would mean violently limiting the Cuban people's basic production and consequently ruining their economy and pauperizing the working masses, who, although their only intervention in sugar profits comes in the form of very low salaries, get from the plantations their only means of subsistence. For this reason, the people of the U. S. A. must clearly be made to understand what is the real meaning and consequence of limiting Cuban sugar imports, and the arbitrary nature of the impending measure.

For Cuba, with its deformed colonial economy depending fundamentally on its sugar exports, the reduction of this quota in the American market signifies unemployment and hunger which will affect 70 per cent of the population. With this limitation of its production and the resultant impoverishment, it will not be able, as a consequence, to buy those manufactured goods which it customarily imports from the U. S. A., a fact which will in large measure affect the U. S. workers.

In 1946, Cuban purchases from the U. S. A. grossed the sum of \$272,000,000 and included the most varied aspects of American industrial production. If the sugar quota is lowered, no such sales could be achieved; with its fundamental production limited, Cuba will be forced into the position of a sub-consumer. Such a measure can only contribute to increasing that joblessness among American workers which is already beginning to beset the masses of this country.

MUST RESIST IMPERIALIST POLICY

In the policy of the U. S. ruling classes today, two contradictory and reactionary elements are coming into play. One section wants to go back to the protectionist stage, and the other—with a more definite awareness of their historical role in the mastery of the world—is in favor of limitless free competition. Both these manifestations express different faces of the same imperialist factor, and show their single identity, besides, in the systematic struggle against democratic rights and the economic and social conquests of the working masses throughout the world.

Consequently, the American working class has a duty of solidarity and support toward the peoples who are held in serfdom by imperialism. The struggle for the defense of economically enslaved peoples becomes identical, in its full revolutionary magnitude, with their own struggle to free themselves from their national capitalism. It is necessary for us to show active resistance to both faces of the imperialist proposal.

Cuba's right—as a country placed under bondage by the penetration of finance capital—to sell its sugar on a big scale in the U. S. market, in some measure protects the American workers against joblessness and impoverishment, and breaks up the imperialists' sinister plans for making the working masses of the whole world submit, through hunger, to conditions of slave-labor.

THE STALINIST SWAMP—DAILY WORKER EXPOSES "RENEGADES" IN NMU

The Daily Worker is featuring a new series of articles on the situation in the National Maritime Union and its relation to the split-off group of Stalinist "renegades" headed by William F. Dunne and Sam Darcy, two former CP leaders. The articles, written by the Daily Worker's labor expert and columnist, George Pegler Morris, purport to be a "behind the scenes" story of Dunne's influence on Curran and his fight to destroy the Stalinist gang in the NMU. In another issue of LABOR ACTION, we will review the contents of this series and analyze for our readers the meaning of this latest outburst by a gang of Stalinist vultures who prey on the labor movement.

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THE STALINISTS ARE BEHIND THIS PARTICULAR SCHEME

UAW Control at Stake in FE Merger Proposal

By DAVID COOLIDGE

The referendum now being taken to determine whether or not the Farm Equipment Workers Union and the United Automobile Workers are to merge into one organization, is just one more illustration of the corrupt and anti-working class role of the Stalinist party in the labor movement.

From what we have learned of the situation from reading the statements issued by the unions we take it that there is strong sentiment for the merger of the two organizations.

It is here, on the merger proposal itself, that the Stalinists enter with their usual rule or ruin, control or wreck, anti-working class procedure.

International Executive Board of the UAW framed a proposal which is something new in the history of the UAW. The Addes-Thomas forces are called the "left wing" by those who still look upon the Communist (Stalinist) Party as a revolutionary party or who, for their own reasons, want to make it appear that this genuinely totalitarian police party is a revolutionary organization.

What is this proposal? It is a most brazen scheme on the part of the Stalinists.

Stalinist party to assume control of and domination over the UAW at its next convention in November. To say that it is a scheme for defeating Reuther for president is not necessarily correct. The Stalinists have before, and will again if it suits their purposes, support an opponent for office if they have the majority of the Executive Board.

We say again that what is at stake here is the attempt of the Stalinist party to assume control of the UAW and domination over this union. That is the meaning of the merger proposal as framed by Addes and his Stalinist mentors, with Thomas tagging along hoping that somehow he will get back into the president's post in the union.

NATURE OF PROPOSAL

The merger proposal now being voted on provides that:

1. An FE division be established having jurisdiction over all workers in the farm equipment industry. All workers in this industry to be under the jurisdiction of the FE division.

2. Every member of the present FE would become "a member in good standing of UAW-CIO as of the date that he became a member of the FE-CIO." When the merger takes place and after his membership card has been issued to him such present FE member "shall be entitled to all the benefits, privileges, services, advantages and prerogatives of membership in UAW-CIO."

3. There will be a director of the FE division "who shall have complete charge... of the FE division." He shall sit in the IEB as FE representative with "full right of voice but without vote for the record."

4. "The present staff of FE-CIO shall be maintained and such additions shall be made as are deemed necessary by the director of the farm equipment industry or FE division, and he shall have complete direction of such staff."

These are the pertinent parts of the proposals which have to do with our charge that this particular merger scheme has been concocted by the Stalinist party and is being advanced and defended by Addes and his aides on the IEB of the UAW.

WHAT IT WILL DO

What will the adoption of this merger scheme do? It will bring into the UAW convention next November a block of between 500 and 600 votes from the FE division. Since the FE is under the control and domination of the Stalinist party, this means that the overwhelming majority of the FE delegates will be Stalinist-controlled delegates.

This FE delegation, combined with the other Stalinist delegations at the convention, will give the Stalinists a majority of the delegates. They will use this majority to take over the UAW. How will they do this? With a majority of the convention delegates they will be in position to elect all the top officers. They will be in position to elect party members or non-members who act like members. A majority will give

LYNN AFFAIR NETS \$70 FOR EUROPEAN RELIEF

The newly organized chapter of the American Committee for European Workers Relief in Lynn, Mass., raised \$70 at its first affair. Mary Lipman, Lynn Chapter chairman, writes as follows:

"An enthusiastic group of young people attended our first fund-raising affair of the year and contributed generously to the appeal for funds by the Boston representative of the ACEWR, Mrs. Augusta Trainor.

"The social, originally planned as a swimming party, was forced indoors by inclement weather. Nevertheless, refreshments, sandwiches, dancing, etc., gave everyone an opportunity to enjoy themselves immensely.

"The need for aid to workers overseas continues undiminished. The ACEWR this week asked for continued support in the form of contributions of money and clothing. Make all checks and money orders payable to ACEWR, and send to 130 West 23rd St., New York 11, N. Y.

them powerful influence in the election of regional directors. With the Stalinists in control of the IEB, with a majority of the top officers and regional directors, they will have dominating influence in the selection of international representatives, organizers, educational directors and all other important posts in the international. Also, they will have control of the finances of the international.

The UAW would be turned into a United Radio and Electrical Workers. Members of the UAW should not be deluded on this point this is precisely what Stalinist control of the UAW would come to. Members of the FE should not delude themselves either. If they want to escape the

poisonous domination of the Stalinist party, they too should vote against this particular merger proposal.

This merger proposal made by Addes and his ring, under the guidance of the Stalinist party, is of course basically undemocratic. It is a typical Stalinist gangster set-up. The two internationals will not be permitted in their respective conventions to decide the question. The proposal is to be rushed through before the UAW convention so that a packed Stalinist delegation from the FE can appear at the UAW convention with full voting rights. The FE division is to elect its own director. No other UAW division or department has this authority. The FE division would have its own unique

membership cards and charters. No UAW division or department has its own direct representative on the UAW Executive Board. No other UAW division would have final and complete authority in the selection and supervision of his staff except the FE division.

This whole proposal is Stalinism in the labor movement at its best, that is, in its best totalitarian regalia. Here is Stalinism again tramping on all democratic rights, spreading its Moscow totalitarian filth and poison in the labor movement in the U. S., seeking to establish its GPU regime in the big and militant UAW.

UAW members saw the Stalinists in action in their union during the war. They should have enough. They

saw these Stalinist opportunists and strike-breakers defend the no-strike pledge, advocate incentive pay, support the capitalist bosses and the WLB. They saw the local Stalinists flood the union with all the propaganda of the totalitarian police bureaucracy of the Kremlin.

They saw the Stalinist party change its line to whatever became the line of the Kremlin, as soon as they could catch up with the line of the Kremlin. They heard the Stalinists call Roosevelt a "fascist" one day and a savior of democracy the next day. UAW workers and other workers read in the Daily Worker today that "this is an imperialist war" and tomorrow that "this is a sacred war." This was the experience of the UAW membership while the Stalinists were not in control of their union. What will they expect and receive from this gang, if and after it attains control of the union? We say again, these workers should have enough of the Stalinists and Stalinism.

We agree with Reuther over against Addes and the Stalinists that: "In order to protect the democratic safeguards of our membership and to maintain the industrial union structure of our organization, you are urged to vote down the FE merger proposal. By voting down this proposal, the entire matter will be referred to the UAW convention, where it can be decided by the delegates in the light of all the facts and after full and democratic discussion."

We take the position we do here not because we are in any basic way opposed to some sort of autonomy for the FE in this merger. We have no principles about the mechanics of mergers in the trade union movement. Trade union mergers should and can take place in all sorts of ways. We are concerned and take the position we do because this is not a mere trade union merger. It is not primarily a trade union question, but genuinely a political question. The Stalinist party is involved here and they are not involved for trade union purposes nor in a trade union way. They are involved with their whole political program, aims, purposes and goal.

No worker should delude himself about this. He should not approach this merger with the naive position that it is always a good thing for working class organizations to merge, to get together. While that is generally or abstractly true, this is a special case: the attempt of the Stalinists to achieve political control of the UAW. That is what we are talking about, that is what all workers should be concerned about. Were it not for Stalinism in this affair we might possibly have nothing whatsoever to say, even about the convention deciding or any of the other questions at issue.

Chrysler Local Votes "For" At Meeting Lacking Quorum

By WALTER JASON

DETROIT—After a four-hour meeting of Chrysler Local 7, which lacked a proper quorum to take action and which witnessed a violent debate between proponents and opponents of the Addes-Thomas-Stalinist proposals for FE-UAW merger, the Addes forces won by a vote of 63 to 55. Since the meeting had no legal status under the constitution or by-laws of the local union, the vote is meaningless insofar as it purports to express the opinion of 10,000 Chrysler workers.

In general, the meeting provided an instructive lesson in trade union democracy. When the merger proposal was brought up, a whole battery of speakers, including R. J. Thomas, vice-president of the UAW-CIO, spoke against the Reuther motion to refer the matter to the next national convention which is to be held in November. The chief argument of the Addes-Stalinist faction was that the Reuther motion would not give the rank and file a chance to decide the issue. "Let the membership decide now," was the slogan of all these speakers.

CHALLENGES THOMAS

After they had been given enough rope to hang themselves, Jack Wick, unemployment compensation director of Local 7, presented a motion to really let the rank and file decide. He moved that Local 7 hold a secret referendum ballot vote for two days, just like a regular local union election.

The speaker challenged Thomas, and his vociferous supporters to carry out their lip-service to rank and file democracy. He pointed out that by common admission the meeting being

held lacked a quorum (less than 125 people were present, 50 below the minimum of a quorum). He further pointed out that whichever side won, the other side would have a sound legal basis for challenging the status of the meeting.

With respect to Thomas' point that the International Executive Board, as the highest authority between conventions, had full right to take its position on FE-UAW merger, the speaker claimed that when decisive questions arise, full opportunity must be given the rank and file to decide the issue, as for example, in the case of the referendum on the no-strike pledge.

"When vital questions arise, every effort should be made to involve the widest possible section of the union movement. This means an extension of union democracy. It means involving the rank and file in deciding their own destiny. This is the essence of trade union democracy. Let Local 7 rebuke the international executive board for not making this a genuine referendum, and giving the rank and file time to study and decide this question."

"Let Local 7 spearhead the fight for the preservation of the fine traditions of democracy in the UAW-CIO." The Addes forces were taken aback by this speech and motion. The pro-Reuther people accepted it enthusiastically.

DEMOCRATIC ISSUE

What answer was given by Thomas, and his supporters? Of course, they evaded the issue. They tied up the meeting in parliamentary knots, and finally president Hattley ruled the motion out of order.

Then a lengthy debate took place on the merger proposal. Again, the

Steel Union Decides to By-Pass NLRB --

(Continued from page 1)

publican politicians who, like the NLRB, are tools of the employers.

What is indicated in the situation is: a flat statement of refusal to submit to any form of government by injunction; a refusal to submit to government intervention in the affairs of unions (as, for example, in the law's provision dictating who can and cannot be an official of a union); an aggressive entry into politics under an independent labor banner in order to establish that kind of government, a workers' government, which would speak labor's, and the people's, interests.

That would seem to be the logic of the position on the NLRB. And that would also seem to require an unambiguous declaration that so far as labor is concerned the law is dead, because labor does not propose to submit to it in any way whatsoever, and will mass its forces in general protest strike to defend any section of the labor movement faced with penalties. In that respect, a 24-hour protest strike would serve now as a sign of labor's attitude to the government and the operation of the law.

RANK AND FILE VOICE

Another question is raised. Murray is in conference with top steel executives. All right, as far as it goes. But: (1) it is our opinion that anything Murray decides in closed session with Fairless of U. S. Steel must be ratified democratically by the membership; and most important (2) it is our opinion that the fight against the anti-labor law cannot and must not be left in the hands of the union officialdom alone.

THE SITUATION DEMANDS THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

OF THE RANK AND FILE. MORE THAN EVER MUST THEY BE DRAWN INTO THE DELIBERATIONS AND HAVE A DIRECT VOICE IN DECIDING POLICY, PLANNING STRATEGY.

Labor attorneys, under the direction of union leaders, are busy planning court tests. These are indicated, but they can prove to be disastrously demoralizing, if not worse, as they drag on for endless months. Court tests, whether fashioned to test a union paper's right to publish the voting record of Congressmen, or another provision of the law, have their place. But it is a limited place. Equally limited are concessions rung from employers exempting a given union from certain provisions, as in the case of the mine workers' new contract. The WHOLE labor movement is involved. The law must be destroyed, and not merely circumvented in particular circumstances.

To destroy the law requires a frontal assault on the whole structure of the bill, and beyond that on the structure of the government. We speak of the kind of frontal assault that can best be organized by union boards of strategy, democratically chosen to coordinate the plans of the different unions, resting locally on councils of action and united in national representative bodies.

Specifically in relation to the steel workers position on the NLRB, we

think a board of strategy, representing the electrical workers, the auto workers, and so forth, should get together, and implement the plan in the fullest detail of contemplated action. Thus, anything the steel workers do would have the immediate backing of workers in other industries.

The employers in helping Congress write its vicious law, did not tackle the problem piece-meal. No more should we. Our answer must be as broad, and given unitedly as a DECLARATION OF LABOR'S INDEPENDENCE. The steel union answer is all right, but it is only a partial answer, and one moreover which raises many questions, notably the question of political action.

Concretely, we propose that the unions come together to issue a declaration which says that labor will

never yield its rights whether it be under threat of law or militia.

Concretely, we propose that the ranks demand a voice in deciding policy, by advocating democratically elected union boards of strategy to map the strategy of battle.

Concretely, we propose that these boards launch an offensive against the employer offensive, an offensive not only to cripple the hateful law, but to ADVANCE labor's position and win a BETTER standard of living for the people.

Concretely, we propose that the ranks clamor for immediate action, on what is the great lesson of this situation, the need for a Labor Party which will cut completely labor's ties with capitalist politicians of Democratic or Republican hue, and weld labor's economic strength into political strength.

Union Lines Drawn In Contest Against Bureaucratic Plan

CHICAGO — The question of the merger of FE-UAW has reached a terrific intensity, with most locals yet to vote on the question. It is yet too early to report on national trends. The majority of the UAW locals will meet to decide this question the week following the Fourth of July holiday week-end.

The lines have quickly been drawn. There are few open minds on the question among the active militants of the union. The question of who mobilizes the most for the local membership meetings often determines elections in locals where the various forces are evenly divided.

The opposition to merger cannot possibly be carried in a local unless the opposition point of view is presented adequately, and the dangers of this "bureaucratic and undemocratic proposal" exposed. When it is noted that 11 regional directors have their full-time staffs at work selling the agreement, as against seven regional directors, plus the top-heavy staffs of Addes, Thomas and Leonard as against the staff of the GM division and Reuther's personal staff, you can see that the odds on a purely mechanical percentage are against those who are campaigning for the proposal's defeat.

There is no doubt that if this proposal had gone to a convention of the UAW its defeat would have been assured. Because the conventions of the UAW have given a clear answer to any proposal that would strengthen any bureaucratic hold over the union. It suffices to point out the votes every year on the question of biennial conventions, international board members at large or on the salaries of top officers. That is precisely why the Addes-Stalinist camp has pushed this question into a local membership meeting referendum, counting on the summer months, the ability of Stalinists and the load of Addes men to shout unity to win for them.

DOCUMENTS OUT

The documents of the two sides on the question are out to the membership. The Addes group, feeling the pressure of the rank and file, has attempted to soothe the sores by interpretations which are nowhere to be found in the Addes-Stalinist proposal.

First, they say that the proposal is only an interim one, one that has to be approved by the convention. The convention is the highest body, etc., etc. They forget that nowhere in the document is there such a word as interim. On the contrary, the merger goes into effect immediately after a YES majority on the referendum wins and the FE convention approves of the merger.

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